



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁷ : G01R 27/28, 31/00, 31/14		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 00/65361
		(43)* International Publication Date: 2 November 2000 (02.11.00)	
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/07962		(81) Designated States: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AT (Utility model), AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, CZ (Utility model), DE, DE (Utility model), DK, DK (Utility model), DM, DZ, EE, EE (Utility model), ES, FI, FI (Utility model), GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SK (Utility model), SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).	
(22) International Filing Date: 23 March 2000 (23.03.00)			
(30) Priority Data: 60/126,060 25 March 1999 (25.03.99) US			
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(54) Title: SIMULATOR CART		Published With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.	
(57) Abstract			
<p>A test system (10) is coupled to a control system (20) in a manner which allows the test system to communicate with and drive the control system by sending and receiving signals via both the controller-I/O communication channel (160) and the field I/O connectors (225). The test system (10) is used to both simulate a plant to be controlled and to monitor, validate, and/or modify the internal state of the control system controller and possibly the control system I/O interface (220). Plant simulation is accomplished by simulating the I/O devices to which the control system (20) is coupled (and hence the plant processes) when installed in the operational environment. In addition to the simulation of I/O devices, the test system (10) takes advantage of the fact that many commonly used controller and I/O interfaces are capable of communication with other devices by using such communications ability to provide instructions to or obtain information from a control system's controller(s) and I/O interface(s).</p>			